



Report on the Inaugural Workshop
of the DFG-funded project
'Modern India in German Archives, 1706-1989'
'Das Moderne Indien in deutschen Archiven,
1706-1989' (MIDA)



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481

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Venue of the Workshop: Seminar für Südasiens-Studien
Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Organising Institutions: Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), Berlin
Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS),
Universität Göttingen

The DFG sponsored long-term research project 'Modern India in German Archives, 1706-1989' (MIDA), seeks to explore the richness and the potential of the holdings of German archives on modern Indian history which has been appreciated insufficiently so far. These resources can present new research perspectives to the international community of historians of India/ South Asia. Research in modern Indian history largely demonstrates an excessive fixation on British colonial archives, taking limited cognisance of the perspectives, which can be offered by these resources in German archives.



At the same time, innovative research questions can be generated for purposes of transnational historical comparison and for the historical analysis of "globalisation" processes, through an exploration of the modern history of German-Indian entanglements. The resulting widening of research perspectives creates new possibilities for a more intensive communication and co-operation between Indian and German traditions of historical inquiry and historical writing – traditions that have taken cognisance of each other, so far, only to a very limited extent.

MIDA aims to produce the necessary conditions for this substantial endeavour through the following objectives:

- To systematically collect, in a single database, catalogue and keyword information on the holdings of German archives on modern India and the history of German-Indian entanglements, from the establishment of the Danish-Halle Mission in South India (1706) up to the end of the political division of Germany (1989/90).
- To make this database available to the international academic community on a long-term basis as a "growing" and open digital resource for the purpose of locating specific archival material and engaging with it for future research;
- To provide the international academic community, as well as a wider public, with long-term access to a digital archive guide, which will be derived from the database and successively expanded in order to present an overview of the full thematic range of relevant collections;
- To demonstrate the potential of German archival resources for India-related studies in exemplary German-Indian pilot research projects and a corresponding publication series.
- To contribute to a sustained realisation of the goal that was formulated on a bilateral workshop of the DFG and the Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR) in November 2012, namely the intensification of German-Indian research co-operation in the Human Sciences. The German-Indian "tandem structure", according to which the pilot projects have been designed, will serve as a key instrument to achieve this aim. This will encourage a) a more intense utilisation of these archival holdings particularly by German and Indian historians and b) the shaping of the necessary multi-linguistic and inter-regional qualification profiles.



MIDA officially commenced on the 1st of November 2014 with research being simultaneously conducted at three partner institutions, namely: the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS), Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Seminar für Südasiens-Studien, Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften (IAAW), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), Berlin.

MIDA's inaugural workshop was organised at the Seminar für Südasiens-Studien, Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin on the 30th and 31st of January, 2015. This report provides an overview of the papers and reports presented at the workshop in Berlin and, at the same time, shows the current state of the art in regard to academic research and historiography.

The Workshop was attended by 21 participants, with varied institutional affiliations, and consisted of 16 presentations. It was structured into 7 panels with two to three presentations each. These consisted of 12 papers presented by scholars and 4 expert reports. While the individual papers dealt with specific subjects through which scholars presented their engagement with holdings on India in different German archives, the aim of having expert reports was to engage with pre-existing expertise on holdings of German archives.

In this context, two of the expert reports (by Joachim Oesterheld and Diethelm Weidemann, Berlin) presented an overview of the relevant holdings on modern Indian history in German archives and the prospective areas of research which are relatively unexplored. The other two reports consisted of expertise shared on archival research and documenting material on Africa in selected German mission archives (Adam Jones, Leipzig) and a presentation offered by one of the founders of 'Facts and Files', an independent research organisation which specialises in archival research and documentation for databases (Frank Drauschke, Berlin).

The former opened interesting questions regarding what can be learned from the experiences of historians of Africa, who have engaged with similar voluminous material and the latter was a methodological reflection on how to help systematise such information. Thus, whereas the former two reports gave the audience an overarching / overall / comprehensive perception of India-related holdings in German archives, based on the lifelong developed expertise of two historians of South Asia, the latter presented expertise on methodological considerations when working on an elaborate project like MIDA. This format enabled a promising blend of knowledge shared on specific projects



engaging with very specific German archival holdings and proficiency in the methodological issues involved when attempting to systemize the wide range of source materials on the Indian subcontinent in the archives of the German speaking areas of Europe.

Day one of the workshop, January 30, 2015, commenced with the official opening of the workshop by Michael Mann in his capacity as the director of the Department of South Asian Studies at Humboldt University, Berlin and one of the three principal investigators of MIDA. This was followed by an elaborate presentation by Ravi Ahuja, the second principal investigator for MIDA, on the key objectives of the research project, which include, among others, creating a database of the pertinent archival materials and making it available for international researchers as a growing/sustainable open resource database. This was followed by an overview of the structure of the project that incorporates two teams based in two cities and three institutions, engaging with four research areas: missionary history, political history, intellectual history and the socio-economic history of modern India in German archives.

The project extends over a period of 12 years, with the time from the second project year up to the tenth year (November 2015-2024) being divided into three phases of 3 years each. Each of these three-year phases will incorporate tandem projects whereby teams of researchers from South Asia and Germany, working on South Asian history utilising holdings of German archives, will work in collaboration. As explained in the presentation, one of the awaited benefits of this endeavour is to ensure cooperation between South Asian and German historians of India and also to create the necessary skills (also of the German language, in the case of South Asian historians) through concerted team research and pilot projects. In this context, from November 2015 onwards, a tandem team of one doctoral student and a post doctoral fellow will commence research on specific themes within the field of political history in Berlin whereas a post-doctoral fellow will be appointed in Göttingen to pursue research in the field of intellectual history.

Panel one of the workshop comprised presentations by Lydia Hauth (Grassi Museum für Völkerkunde, Leipzig) and Jahnavi Phalkey (Kings College, London), the former titled 'A German Researcher in India-Egon von Eickstedt's Collection at the State Ethnographic Collections of Saxony' and the latter 'Science, Technology and India in German Archives.' Hauth's paper discussed the relatively recently re-discovered



photographic collection and the diaries of a twentieth century physical anthropologist in India, Egon von Eickstedt, who was sent on a two year expedition to India by the Museum of Ethnography in Leipzig and the State Research Institute for Ethnology to reconstruct the history of early settlements in South Asia. Whereas the objects collected by v. Eickstedt have been in the possession of the State Ethnographic Collections of Saxony (SES), these diaries and photographs were handed over to SES only after his death, declared lost after World War II. The aim is to make this collection digitally accessible to researchers and other audiences. The paper offered an important insight into how anthropological knowledge, though ethically highly questionable, was produced in the early twentieth century and shed light on unique material from v. Eickstadt's collection on Europe's encounter with India.

Phalkey's presentation offered insights into the interlinked trajectories of South Asian and German scientists, with the attempt to interpret India and Germany in a global context, specifically through a history of aeronautics, aspects of military history and engineering education. It elucidated the importance of identifying and writing from country specific archival material that goes beyond the corpus of diplomatic and international history, therein being an important contribution to MIDA's commitments and objectives.

Panel two consisted of Armin Grünbacher's (University of Birmingham) 'German Conservatives, India and the Hallstein Doctrine. A Document from the Chancellery' and an expert report by Adam Jones (Leipzig Universität). Grünbacher's paper discussed the question of India's considerations to recognize the GDR and its consequences for the BRD foreign policy. The paper used files (1960s) of the Federal Chancellery in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, the archive of the Auswärtiges Amt, the Thyssen-Krupp archive and the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). Its starting point was a report in the Federal Chancellery which presents an exchange between a conservative West German journalist (K. Mehnert) and the permanent undersecretary of the Indian Foreign Office (S. Dutt) whereby Dutt spoke '... as an Indian, not part of the Government' ... 'about contradictions in Bonn's foreign policy ... and India's growing inclination to recognise the GDR.' The paper thus shifted the focus in the previous panel from the history of science and technology to the ambit of diplomatic history, evoking yet another important aspect of German-Indian entanglements i.e. how these interconnections shaped diplomatically after Germany was divided.



Adam Jones's (Universität Leipzig) expert report was titled 'Another continent: Lessons drawn from documenting material on Africa in selected German mission archives'. Based on his experience with missionary archives for some African countries, it brought methodological issues involved in systemising archival information to the forefront. The presentation raised the important question of the completeness of information if one only focuses on archival holdings of the German speaking countries' archives. This offered interesting parallels to holdings related to modern Indian history as well. For example, the question of what one does with archival holdings, which though geographically located in India, are solely in the German language, referring to information that could not be re-transferred to where the actors producing it came from. An example of the same are holdings related to the Gossener Mission in an archive located in Ranchi, Bihar.

Panel three comprised Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi's (Berlin) 'Archival Sources on the Hanoverian Regiments in India: the Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv in Hannover,' and Vandana Joshi's (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Delhi University) 'Between Erasure and Remembrance: Shreds from the Kriegsalltag of South Asian Faujis (Sipahis) in Stammlagers, Arbeitskommandos, Lazaretts and Graves (1939-45)'. The first paper discussed the presence of German troops (two regiments of the Hanoverian army) in eighteenth-century India, who were sent in 1782 to assist the British East India Company in the Second Anglo Mysore War and remained in India until 1791, long after the war was over. Ashkenazi's paper showed that while the India Office Records holds crucial sources on the organisation and recruitment of these regiments, the most important sources belong to the Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv in Hanover bearing information on the administration of the troops that has acquired prime importance for military and social historians. The paper also highlighted the existing information gap due to missing personal sources like diaries and private letters. The presentation was a careful rendering of the holdings of the archive and how the existing gaps may be addressed by suggesting where these personal sources could be located.

The second paper, based on the holdings of the International Tracing Service Archive, shed light on the presence of South Asian Faujis (soldiers) in Germany during World War II with a specific focus on processes of counting, registration and, at times, the exhumation of graves of South Asian civilians and prisoners of war. Whereas some of the stories of soldiers who served the Wehrmacht as a part of the



Indian Legion have been documented and narrated, those of others have remained anonymous. The paper, like its predecessor, highlighted the absence of ego-documents which would shed light on the everyday life of numerous South Asians in Stalags, Arbeitskommandos, sick bays and residential areas. It nonetheless emphasised the important evidence provided by lists of civilians and prisoners of war, alive or dead, especially prepared after the Order of 6th of December, 1945. The order necessitated local and district authorities from Germany to conduct exhaustive searches for all documents on military and civilian persons in Germany belonging to the UK since 1939 and to submit their findings to their respective occupational forces. The two papers well complemented each other, speaking of experiences of soldiers from both the sides, though belonging to different temporal frameworks.

Panel four consisted of an expert report by Joachim Oesterheld (formerly Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), which raised numerous questions and suggestions regarding possible fields of exploration and methodological concerns when researching modern India in the holdings of German archives. Among the numerous issues raised were: the question of records on Germans, who went to India and died while there, thus causing a gap in information in the German holdings; history of trade relations (illustrations being Faber Castell, porcelain and ceramic trade, printing of matchboxes for the Indian market in Germany, locomotives, lithographs etc.) and the relatively under-explored period of India's relations with the BRD and GDR during 1945-89. The report was a valuable addition to MIDA's objectives as it enabled the sharing of pre-existing expertise on archival research on India in Germany and vice versa by a renowned historian of South Asia.



Expert Report presented by Prof. Dr. Joachim Oesterheld.
(Photograph taken by author)

488

Gregor Metzgi (Universität Regensburg) presented a paper titled 'Alltag und Mission. Deutschsprachige Jesuiten im portugiesischen Weltreich (1616-1773)' focussing on a history of the everyday life of German speaking Jesuits in India. The presentation aptly illustrated the decentralised nature of holdings related to the subject, which are also distributed/ scattered in numerous German archives. The paper discussed the everyday interactions of German speaking Jesuits with various population groups in the colonies and how one can think of transcontinental historical comparison when documenting perceptions of foreigners. The various sources offered by German national archives, family archives, archives of the North German Province SJ (Munich, formerly Cologne), for example the German missionaries' correspondence with their families and friends, their treatises and writings, thus offer a hitherto untapped potential.

Mrinalini Sebastian's (Philadelphia) 'The Other Story of Indology: European Missionaries and the global Journeys of Vernacular Knowledge,' opened yet another sphere of historical entanglements and encounters between German speaking Central Europe and Southern India. Sebastian pointed to how in the nineteenth century, at the peak of German interest in India related material, Antiquity and



Sanskrit were the two primary themes that dominated Indological Studies. Shifting the focus away from this bias, the paper traced the global circulation of indigenous botanical knowledge from southern India to Europe and its journey back to India. Whereas the former was enabled through the scholarly works of Germanophone missionaries, the latter was materialised through scholars and pedagogues who worked in the field of Botany. The paper offered insights into how interactions with 'other' vernacular knowledge(s) from south India open a wide field of research for Indology and how one may trace the trajectories of such missionary mediated knowledge in the field of Botany.

Day two of the workshop began with an expert report by Diethelm Weidemann's (formerly Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) extensive overview of the history of German-Asian relations. Some of the points raised included: the need to ensure a dialogue among researchers engaging with the India related holdings in the German archives and National Archives of India, to locate the continuity and change in German policies on India, especially in the face of a changing international context, the historical evolution of the German perception of India, histories of German travellers to India, discussions within the Nazi party on how to deal with the "brown Aryans", that is, Indians.

489

The discussion followed by the presentation led to the awareness that the speaker, in his capacity as a professor at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in the former GDR, had engaged extensively in prompting exchange between students at the university in Berlin and Jawaharlal Nehru University in India, in the preparation of catalogues documenting the holdings related to Indo-German relations both in Indian as well as German archives. The same, as hard copies, shall be handed over to the library of the Zentrum Moderne Orient and can therein become an invaluable resource for the MIDA database. The same shall be digitalised in order to duly preserve the pre-existing individual work, which bears parallels to MIDA's intellectual commitments, done by German historians of India.

Panel five comprised of Brigitte Klosterberg's (Franckesche Stiftungen/ Francke Foundation, Halle) paper titled 'Die Quellen zur Dänisch-Halleschen Mission im Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen'. A majority of the Danish-Halle Mission's sources, which are a rich documentation of the history of the Protestant Church in India, are to be found in the archive of the Francke Foundation. Since 2006, the archive also holds original sources from the missionaries in Tranque-



bar, which were acquired by the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Leipzig. This valuable collection amounts to over 34 000 documents, which are now available to be accessed via the Foundation's database. Additionally, information was provided on the currently under construction 'Francke Portal', which bears interesting parallels to MIDA's objectives of opening new research possibilities in the field. Klosterberg's paper provided a comprehensive overview of the holdings on the mission that are available in the archive of the Francke Foundation. The material comprises, among others, manuscripts in Tamil and Telugu that were brought to Halle, the 'Halleschen Reports', which were entries in the first protestant missionary magazine and the palm leaf manuscript collection. This highly interactive presentation, gave the audiences essential hints on how to access these now digitally processed sources through the catalogues on the Foundation's website

Keyvan Djahangiri's (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) presentation was also based on the holdings of the Francke Foundation and titled 'Centres of Calculation' or Dead End? Early Modern Material on 'India' in German Archives'. The first part of the paper discussed a number of questions on 'India' as a topic of information and knowledge. The second part related to methodological considerations for archival studies on India. In line with perspectives that MIDA aims to engage with, the paper showed how German archives offer a richness for re-visiting western Indology which has so far been dominated by British colonial archives related academia. Using Bruno Latour's framework of 'Centres of Calculation', the paper discussed the following important questions with regard to unpublished and edited early modern archival material from the foundation: 'Do we witness German 'Centres of Calculation' in Halle where information is accumulated, circulated and managed on 'India'? and if so, how? Do these centres constantly reproduce imagined, transmitted and materialised topics of knowledge? Or are we rather confronted with standardisation procedures of information production that lead to a static and instructive dead end of knowledge?'

Panel six consisted of Ajay Bharadwaj, Anne Murphy and Raghavendra R.V. Karkala's (University of Vancouver) paper on 'Early Films/Images in and about India: The German Lens,' and Debjani Bhattacharya's (Drexel University, Philadelphia) 'The Influence of German Town Planning in British India: Tracing the heritage of Lex Adikes.' The former raised the question of how early filmic representations of/in/about India can help historians of India to re-adjust and relocate their understandings of the engagement of Europe with India.



In a similar vein as some of the presentations, the paper raised the need to shift the emphasis away from the lens of colonial archives. The presentation pointed to how engagement with archival sources on German filmic representations of and in India can open an interesting sphere of research that engages with 'an understanding of the German 'eye' in the imagination of India.'

Bhattacharya's paper explored the global circulation of Lex Adikes, a law developed by Dr Franz Adikes as the mayor of Frankfurt (1890-1912), which was first translated in English by E.G. Turner, a British civil servant in Bombay. The paper made a plea for the hitherto under-researched field of the transfer of bureaucratic knowledge. Whereas circuits of medical and technological information between Germany and India via Britain and the entanglements of political ideas are topics that are increasingly researched, those related to bureaucratic knowledge are yet to be further explored. The paper dealt with the British engineer E.P. Richards' first comprehensive town planning report for Calcutta (1914) and demonstrated how the report did not just employ British town planning laws but more so drew upon German sources as ready references.

Panel seven comprised an expert report by Frank Drauschke (Berlin), with illustrative examples from the experiences of 'Facts and Files', as an independent research organisation based in Berlin dealing with creating databases and conducting archival research. Some of the examples of the previous work with which the organisation has engaged include: archival research and database creation for life insurance policies of victims of the Holocaust, research in German archives on the history of Oman's presence in Zanzibar, digitalisation for anniversaries (eg. Europiana). The report raised discussions on certain crucial aspects also relevant for MIDA's future endeavours. These included, among others, the choice of database for the project, the structure of the database, the choice of archives and the respective relevant holdings, the usage of finding aids, the language used for the database, the topic of 'India' being a much wider administrative category and the question of displaying the data in different formats.

The workshop ended with a round table discussion 'Where do we go from here', moderated by Heike Liebau (Zentrum Moderne Orient, Berlin), the third principal investigator of the MIDA project. This became a platform for discussing numerous overarching issues. Among these were: the dual pillars of MIDA's objectives, namely, the production of a database and promoting research projects, technical aspects

related to the project, the question of conducting instructive workshops for engaging researchers in the three institutions, the link between the individual doctoral and post-doctoral projects, the participation of the tandem teams in the creation of the database, working time to be allotted by the individual researchers to the database, the extent of descriptions of holdings the resulting database would offer (so as to give a balanced overview and neither just a sheer listing of the collections nor descriptions that are too in-depth), the question of whether all the teams should engage in a concerted, intensive time together in the initial phase in the individual archives rather than doing insular work for reasons of consistency and coherence in methods and finally, the type of research monographs to be expected from the tandem teams at the end of each three year phase.

The format of the workshop – being a combination of papers presented on specific topics utilising particular holdings on India in individual German archives and the experts' experiences from different archives – was highly praised by both the participants and the attending audience. The workshop was an enriching and necessary step not only in announcing MIDA's formal commencement to the community of historians of modern India and for mobilising pre-existing expertise on the research subject, but also a platform for engaging in discussions and gaining suggestions on how to proceed in the upcoming years.

The second MIDA Workshop will be organised on the 5th and the 6th of November 2015 and will be an important platform whereby the guest speaker, Indira Sengupta, will share her expertise in the field. It will also provide the possibility for the newly appointed MIDA team members, both in Berlin as well as in Göttingen (Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Fellows), to present their individual research projects to be pursued for the upcoming three years within the framework of the MIDA project.

Current Team Members:

Principal Investigators
Prof. Dr. Ravi Ahuja (CeMIS)
Dr. Heike Liebau (ZMO)
Prof. Dr. Michael Mann (IAAW)
Co-Ordinator
Dr. Martin Christof-Füchsle (CeMIS)

REVIEW ESSAY

Post-Doc Fellows

Dr. Anandita Bajpai

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PhD Projects

Alexander Benatar, Dipl. Jur., M.A. (IAAW)

Anna Sailer (CeMIS)

Student Assistants

Johannes Heymann (ZMO)

Theresa Suski (IAAW)



Members of the first year – initial phase of MIDA: Prof. Dr Michael Mann, Prof. Dr Ravi Ahuja, Dr Heike Liebau, Anna Seiler, Dr Martin Christoph-Fuechsle and Dr Anandita Bajpai (taking the photograph, as well as the following pictures of the plenum)

